



United States Attorney's Office  
District of Columbia

Ronald C. Machen Jr.  
United States Attorney

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## PRESS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **District of Columbia Woman Pleads Guilty to Charges In Massive Credit Card Fraud & Identity Theft Scheme – Part of a Ring that Stole Identifying Information, Obtained Credit, Made Charges–**

WASHINGTON - Renarda Gail Robinson Miller, 48, pleaded guilty today before the Honorable Judge Henry H. Kennedy Jr. to conspiracy and fraud in connection with access devices in connection with her participation in a scheme to steal identifying information, obtain credit and/or access victims' existing bank accounts, and purchase merchandise, pay bills, and pay D.C. parking tickets with the stolen credit and bank accounts.

The guilty plea, which took place in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, was announced by U.S. Attorney Ronald C. Machen Jr., Daniel S. Cortez, Inspector in Charge, Washington Division, U.S. Postal Inspection Service, District of Columbia Inspector General Charles J. Willoughby, Jeffrey Irvine, Special Agent in Charge, Washington Field Office, U.S. Secret Service, and Metropolitan Police Department Chief Cathy L. Lanier.

Miller faces a statutory sentence of up to 20 years of incarceration and a fine of up to \$250,000. Pursuant to the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, she faces a sentence of up to 151 months in prison and a fine of up to \$150,000.

Sentencing has not been scheduled, but is expected to take place in early 2011. The investigation is ongoing.

According to information submitted to the court by Assistant U.S. Attorney Sherri L. Schornstein, Miller and others organized a highly sophisticated identity theft and fraud ring from December 2006 through March 2010. The activity involved more than 176 corporate and individual victims and at least 765 transactions. It resulted in about \$1,446,805 in fraudulently obtained lines of credit and charges to those lines of credit of approximately \$88,855.

| Miller, of Washington, D.C., organized an extensive network of co-conspirators who obtained victims' identifying information and bank account information by stealing mail from the mailboxes at personal residences located in the District of Columbia and elsewhere.

The network also stole credit card receipts from a medical office in the 7300 block of Wisconsin Avenue NW and from two locations of Johnson's Flower Shop, at 4200 Wisconsin Ave., NW, Washington, D.C., and 10313 Kensington Ave., Kensington, Md. In addition, credit card receipts and prescriptions were stolen from the CVS Pharmacy at 13<sup>th</sup> and U Streets NW, and student identifying information was stolen from Howard University.

Miller used the stolen identification information to order credit reports in the names of the various victims to obtain other identifying information of the victims; to determine the victims' existing account information, including available credit on existing credit accounts; and to determine the victims' account histories. The stolen identification information was then used to make fraudulent transactions on legitimate credit accounts maintained by victims, to open and use on-line credit accounts, and /or to effect debit transactions directly from the victims' checking accounts to make "pay-by-phone" transactions.

Miller asked others to accept delivery of merchandise shipped to their residences in the District of Columbia and elsewhere, which was purchased using the stolen or fraudulently obtained account information. In exchange, these people received various benefits, such as merchandise, payment of utility and cell phone bills, and payment of D.C. parking tickets.

In addition, Miller and others would receive "orders" for merchandise or to pay bills. The "customers" would give Miller one-half of the face value of the cost for the merchandise, bill or outstanding parking tickets. Miller would use stolen or fraudulently obtained account information to pay for the merchandise, bill or parking tickets.

Four other individuals have previously pleaded guilty in connection with this case. They are: Dionne Witherspoon 36, of Washington, D.C., Kimberly Hatton, 44, of Washington, D.C. , Peeair Bassil, 44, of Washington, D.C., and LaKisha Williams, 34, of Oxon Hills, Maryland.

The case serves as a reminder that consumers are encouraged to check their credit reports annually to ensure that credit histories are accurate. They can obtain free copies of their credit reports by contacting [www.annualcreditreport.com](http://www.annualcreditreport.com) or by calling 1-877-322-8228.

At any time, if an unauthorized account or charges are discovered, consumers should contact the issuing credit card company or bank to report the fraud. In addition, a fraud alert can be placed on the individual's credit file. A fraud alert can help prevent an identity thief from opening accounts in another person's name.

In announcing today's guilty plea, United States Attorney Machen commended the work of Special Agent Bernadette Atwater, D.C. Office of the Inspector General; Postal Inspector Dean Davis, U.S. Postal Inspection Service; Special Agent Christopher Macomber, U.S. Secret Service; Detective Michael Pavero, Metropolitan Police Department, and the staff of the U.S. Attorney's Office, including Paralegal Carolyn Cody and Assistant U.S. Attorney Sherri L. Schornstein, who is prosecuting the case.